

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

DiverseMind was developed as part of the Erasmus+ project and is aimed at enhancing students' awareness and understanding of additional educational needs. The workshop supported the development of empathy, inclusion, and informed perspectives on neurodiversity. It was piloted in Stepaside Educate Together Secondary School in January 2026 with approximately 50 students aged 12–17. The group represented a diverse range of abilities and learning needs and was designed using inclusive practices to ensure accessibility and to promote respect for differences and inclusion.

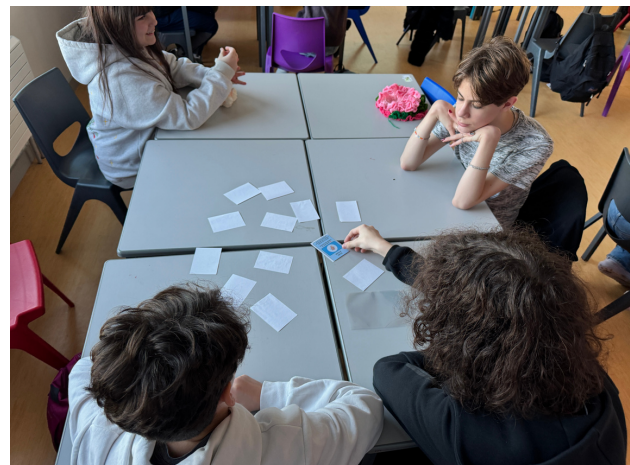
DESCRIPTION OF IMPLEMENTED STRATEGIES

The session combined short teacher-led presentations with student-led activities. Key learning objectives included understanding neurodiversity, recognising the experiences of students with additional educational needs, and identifying practical ways to support peers in everyday school contexts. Classrooms were arranged in groups of six to promote collaboration, discussion, and active participation. To ensure accessibility, materials and activities were designed to suit a range of learning needs, including clear instructions, structured tasks, and opportunities for all students to contribute according to their strengths.

MODULE 3

SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Dyslexia
Dyspraxia
Dyscalculia
Dysgraphia



The workshop was delivered across two one-hour lessons using the following structure:

1. **Pre-workshop survey** to assess students' prior knowledge.
2. **Introduction to the Diverse Mind programme**, including definitions of the additional needs explored in the module.
3. **Class discussion** based on the prompt: "How you can help a friend?" to encourage reflection on real-life scenarios.
4. **Student-led interactive games** (two per module) to reinforce learning and build empathy, followed by group discussion on their purpose and key messages.
5. **Post-workshop survey** to evaluate students' learning.

LEARNING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED

Game 1: Match the Mind

A memory and discussion matching game where students match "Learning Heroes" representing different learning styles.

Learning Goal: Understand neurodiversity, build empathy and inclusion.

What Students Learned: Students recognised different ways of learning and discussed how to support others in an inclusive classroom.

Game 2: The Learning Ladder

A board game exploring learning challenges and supports through gameplay inspired by snakes and ladders.

Learning Goal: Build empathy, understand challenges and supports in learning.

What Students Learned: Students understood how challenges impact learning and how supports can improve inclusion and participation.

THE LEARNING LADDER

100	99	98		96	95	94	93	92	91
81		83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
80	79	78	77	76	75		73	72	71
61	62	63	64	65	66	67		69	70
60	59		57	56	55	54	53	52	51
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48		50
40	39	38	37		35	34	33	32	31
21	22	23	24	25		26	28	29	30
20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	
1	2	3		5	6	7	8	9	10

THE LEARNING LADDER



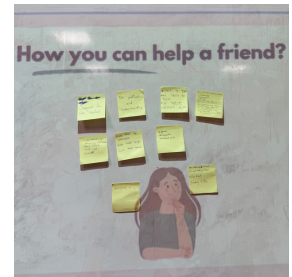
RESULTS AND IMPACT

Overall, the DiverseMind workshop received very positive feedback from students. In response to the question *"How can we help our friends?"*, students demonstrated strong empathy and awareness, emphasising patience, allowing extra time during group work, and avoiding judgement. One student highlighted the importance of "accommodating needs without treating others too differently."

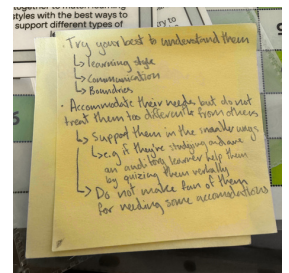


The workshop created a safe space for open discussion, where students reflected on experiences of support, challenge, and difference in the classroom. It also helped students recognise that supporting others is not just the teacher's role, but a shared responsibility across the whole school community, something some students found surprising.

Through the 'Match the Mind' game, students explored practical strategies to support peers with different learning styles. The activities encouraged openness and allowed students, particularly those with Specific Learning Difficulties, to share their experiences in a way that felt safe and non-exposing. They also helped students to step into others' perspectives, deepening their understanding.



Overall, the programme fostered greater empathy, teamwork, and inclusion, with the potential to positively influence interactions beyond the classroom.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the activities were highly effective in promoting student engagement, reflection, and empathy. One strategy that worked particularly well was displaying the question "How can we help a friend?" on the board and asking students to respond using sticky notes. This encouraged individual reflection and led to more student-led, thoughtful contributions grounded in their own experiences.

The games were most successful when students worked in small groups of 3–4, as this created the best balance of participation and discussion. Practical adaptations, such as using small LEGO pieces as movers in the Learning Ladder game and incorporating two dice, helped maintain pace and interest. Future iterations of this game may include greater movement forward/backward on the board to increase engagement. Additionally, adding reflective questions, such as asking students to identify the learning style or specific difficulty represented in each scenario card, would further strengthen understanding.

Overall, the workshop demonstrated that structured, interactive activities combined with opportunities for reflection can significantly enhance empathy, inclusion, and student voice.